## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-35.   (Cancelled)

36.   (New)  A service providing method of providing a current user of a first apparatus with each service provided by a plurality of other apparatuses via a network, wherein the first apparatus is able to communicate with each of the plurality of other apparatuses via the network and is locally connectable to a recording medium from among recording media that are uniquely assigned to users of the first apparatus, each recording medium has a media identifier as a unique identifier recorded thereon and is transportable, and each recording medium includes an area for storing encrypted unique information which is unique information that has been encrypted, said service providing method comprising:

a service requesting operation of the first apparatus requesting a second apparatus to provide a service desired by the current user, the second apparatus being one of the plurality of other apparatuses;

a reading operation of, if a recording medium of the current user is locally connected to the first apparatus, the second apparatus reading the media identifier in the locally connected recording medium via the first apparatus and the network, and if a recording medium of the current user is locally connected to the first apparatus and stores encrypted unique information, the second apparatus reading the encrypted unique information in the locally connected recording medium via the first apparatus and the network; and

a service providing operation of the second apparatus (i) generating a decryption key based on the media identifier read in said reading operation, (ii) generating unique information by decrypting the encrypted unique information read in said reading operation by using the generated decryption key, (iii) customizing the desired service according to the generated unique information, and (iv) transmitting the customized service to the first apparatus.

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37. (New) The service providing method of claim 36, wherein:

in said reading operation, if encrypted unique information is not stored in the locally connected recording medium or a recording medium is not locally connected to the first apparatus, the second apparatus does not read encrypted unique information from anywhere; and

in said service providing operation, if encrypted unique information has not been read in said reading operation, the second apparatus transmits the desired service to the first apparatus in an uncustomized state.

38. (New) The service providing method of claim 37, wherein:

the encrypted unique information stored in each recording medium is encrypted user information which is user information that is inherent to a user assigned the recording medium and which has been encrypted; and

in said service providing operation, the second apparatus customizes the desired service for the current user according to user information generated by decrypting the encrypted user information as the read encrypted unique information, and transmits the customized service to the first apparatus.

39. (New) The service providing method of claim 38, further comprising a user information updating operation, which is performed after said reading operation, of the second apparatus, if the user information inherent to the current user needs to be updated, updating the decrypted user information included in the read unique information and overwriting the encrypted user information in the locally connected recording medium based on the updated user information via the network and the first apparatus.

40. (New) The service providing method of claim 39, wherein in said user information updating operation, the second apparatus generates encrypted updated user information by encrypting the updated user information in a manner such that the encrypted updated user information can be decrypted by using the decryption key, and overwrites the encrypted user information in the locally connected recording medium with the updated and encrypted user information.

41.     (New)  The service providing method of claim 40, wherein:

the network is the Internet;

the first apparatus is an Internet terminal operable to run a specialized Internet browser;

each of the plurality of other apparatuses is a Web site;

the unique information includes cookie information used through the Internet browser; and

each recording medium stores the cookie information as a file.

42.     (New)  The service providing method of claim 37, wherein:

the unique information stored in each recording medium includes the media identifier of the recording medium;

the second apparatus stores user information so that user information inherent to each user is associated with the media identifier of the recording medium assigned to the user; and

said service providing operation includes

a user information finding operation of the second apparatus finding user information associated with the media identifier that has been read in said reading operation, and

a customizing operation of the second apparatus customizing the desired service for the current user according to the user information found in said user information finding operation.

43.     (New)  The service providing method of claim 36, further comprising a recording medium connection operation, which is performed before said service requesting operation, of locally connecting the first apparatus to the recording medium assigned to the current user.

44. (New) The service providing method of claim 43, wherein:

the encrypted unique information stored in each recording medium is encrypted user information that is inherent to a user assigned the recording medium and has been encrypted; and

said service providing operation includes

a user password receiving operation of the second apparatus receiving a user password from the current user via the first apparatus,

a decryption key generating operation of the second apparatus generating a decryption key based on read media identifier read in said reading operation and the user password received in said user password receiving operation,

a decryption operation of the second apparatus decrypting the encrypted user information that has been read in said reading operation by using the decryption key generated in said decryption key generation operation, and

a customizing operation of the second apparatus customizing the desired service for the current user according to the user information decrypted in said decryption operation.

45. (New) The service providing method of claim 44, wherein:

each recording medium includes a secure data area,

the media identifier of each recording medium is stored in the secure data area of the recording medium, and

said reading operation includes

a device authentication operation of performing a device authentication between the first apparatus and the locally connected recording medium, and

a reading prohibition operation of, if the device authentication performed in said device authentication operation has ended in failure, prohibiting the second apparatus from reading data from the secure data area of the locally connected recording medium.

46.     (New) A service providing method used by a first apparatus operable to receive each service provided by a plurality of other apparatuses via a network and provide the received service to a current user of the first apparatus, wherein the first apparatus is able to communicate with each of the plurality of other apparatuses via the network and is locally connectable to a recording medium from among recording media that are uniquely assigned to users of the first apparatus, each recording medium has a media identifier as a unique identifier recorded thereon and is transportable, and each recording medium includes an area for storing unique information, said service providing method comprising:

a service requesting operation of the first apparatus requesting a second apparatus to provide a service desired by the current user, the second apparatus being one of the plurality of other apparatuses;

a transmitting operation of, if a recording medium of the current user is locally connected to the first apparatus, the first apparatus reading the media identifier in the locally connected recording medium and transmitting the read media identifier to the second apparatus via the network, and if a recording medium of the current user is locally connected to the first apparatus and stores unique information, the first apparatus reading the unique information in the locally connected recording medium and transmitting the read unique information to the second apparatus via the network; and

a service providing operation of the first apparatus receiving a service that has been customized by the second apparatus from the second apparatus and providing the received service to the current user, wherein the second apparatus customizes the customized service by (i) generating a decryption key based on the media identifier that has been transmitted to the second apparatus in said transmitting operation, (ii) generating unique information by decrypting, by using the generated decryption key, the encrypted unique information that has been transmitted to the second apparatus, and (iii) customizing a desired service according to the generated unique information.

47.     (New) The service providing method of claim 46, wherein:

in said transmitting operation, if encrypted unique information is not stored in the locally connected recording medium or a recording medium is not locally connected to

the first apparatus, the first apparatus does not read encrypted unique information from anywhere; and

in said service providing operation, if encrypted unique information is not transmitted in said transmitting operation, the first apparatus receives the desired service from the second apparatus in an uncustomized state and provides the received service to the current user.

48. (New) The service providing method of claim 47, wherein:

the encrypted unique information stored in each recording medium is encrypted user information which is user information that is inherent to a user assigned the recording medium and which has been encrypted and

in said service providing operation, the first apparatus receives the customized service from the second apparatus and provides the received service to the current user, wherein the second apparatus customizes the service by (i) generating the decryption key based on the media identifier transmitted to the second apparatus in said transmitting operation, (ii) generating user information by decrypting, using the generated decryption key, the encrypted user information which is the encrypted unique information that has been transmitted to the second apparatus in said transmitting operation, and (iii) customizing the desired service for the current user according to the generated user information.

49. (New) The service providing method of claim 48, further comprising a user information updating operation, which is performed after said transmitting operation, of the first apparatus, if the user information inherent to the current user needs to be updated, receiving information based on updated user information from the second apparatus and overwriting the encrypted user information in the locally connected recording medium with the updated user information.

50. (New) The service providing method of claim 49, wherein in said user information updating operation, the first apparatus receives, from the second apparatus, the updated user information that has been encrypted in a manner such that the encrypted

updated user information can be decrypted by using the decryption key, and overwrites the encrypted user information in the locally connected recording medium with the updated user information.

51.    (New)  The service providing method of claim 50, wherein:

the network is the Internet;

the first apparatus is an Internet terminal operable to run a specialized Internet browser;

each of the plurality of other apparatuses is a Web site;

the unique information includes cookie information used through the Internet browser; and

each recording medium stores the cookie information as a file.

52.    (New)  The service providing method of claim 47, wherein:

the unique information stored in each recording medium includes the media identifier of the recording medium;

the second apparatus stores user information so that user information inherent to each user is associated with the media identifier of the recording medium assigned to the user; and

the customized service that is received and provided in said service providing operation is generated at the second apparatus by finding user information associated with the media identifier transmitted in said transmitting operation and customizing the desired service for the current user according to the found user information.

53.    (New)  The service providing method of claim 46, further comprising a recording medium connection operation, which is performed before said service requesting operation, of locally connecting the first apparatus to the recording medium assigned to the current user.

54. (New) The service providing method of claim 53, wherein:

the encrypted unique information stored in each recording medium is encrypted user information that is inherent to a user assigned the recording medium, the user information having been encrypted;

said service providing operation includes a user password receiving operation of receiving a user password from the current user; and

the customized service that is received and provided in said service providing operation is generated at the second apparatus by generating a decryption key based on the media identifier transmitted in said transmitting operation and the user password received in said user password receiving operation, decrypting the encrypted user information included in the transmitted unique information using the generated decryption key, and customizing the desired service for the current user according to the decrypted user information.

55. (New) The service providing method of claim 54, wherein:

each recording medium includes a secure data area;

the media identifier of each recording medium is stored in the secure data area of the recording medium; and

said transmitting operation includes

a device authentication operation of performing a device authentication between the first apparatus and the locally connected recording medium, and

a transmitting prohibition operation of, if the device authentication performed in said device authentication operation has ended in failure, prohibiting the first apparatus from transmitting data to the secure data area of the locally connected recording medium.